

TRIBUTE TO VETERANS OF THE
ARMED FORCES OF THE UNITED
STATES

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 12, 2020

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to all the men and women who have served in the Armed Forces of the United States and risked their lives to defend our freedoms and way of life and took and lived the oath to "support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic" and bore true faith and allegiance to the same, an obligation they took freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion.

Veterans are truly heroes walking among us.

I want to thank all of our armed servicemen and women for their selfless dedication to our protection every day.

Veterans Day is a reminder to all of us who live in freedom that, as President Kennedy said, "The price of freedom is high, but Americans have always paid it."

This Veterans Day is a welcome opportunity to remember that the fallen who gave the last full measure of devotion to their country on battlefields around the world—in places whose names may be unforgettable—or locations that have slipped into the pages of history.

We will never forget: Revolutionary War—Valley Forge, Yorktown; Civil War—The Battle of Antietam, The Battle of Gettysburg; World War I—The Battle of Argonne, Flanders Field, Verdun; World War II—Pearl Harbor, Battle of Bataan, The Battle of Midway, D-Day, Battle of the Bulge, Battle of Anzio, Battle of Corregidor; Korean War—Inchon, Heart Break Ridge, Pork Chop Hill; Vietnam—Tet Offensive, Battle of Hue; Desert Storm—September 11, 2001, Pentagon Attack (125 killed); Operation Enduring Freedom—Battle of Kandahar; Operation Iraqi Freedom—Second Battle of Fallujah.

The memory of the fallen are never forgotten.

Each Veterans Day, Americans come together to remember those who have served our country around the world in the name of freedom and democracy.

The debt that we owe to them is immeasurable.

Their sacrifices, and those of their families, are freedom's foundation.

Without the brave efforts of all the soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines and Coast Guardsmen and women and their families, our country would not live so freely.

I offer my deepest gratitude to our nation's troops and reservists, their families, and the 21.6 million veterans, including 29,126 here in the 18th Congressional District.

21.6 million brave men and women are veterans of our nation's military service.

This includes more than 2 million women, 2.7 million African-American men and women, 1.5 million Hispanic men and women, 342,000 Asian-American Pacific Islanders, and 178,000 American Indians.

Nine in ten military families believe the public does not understand or appreciate their sacrifices.

We use Veterans Day to show our veterans and military families how important they are to

us and how grateful we are for them each and everyday.

November is National Caregivers Month to show our caregivers how grateful we are for them.

It is only fitting that we thank those caregivers who serve our military today.

5.5 million spouses, parents, children, and other loved ones care for our wounded warriors and 15 percent of caregivers spend 40+ hours a week providing care for our military families.

As a senior member of the House Committees on Judiciary and Homeland Security, I care deeply about our veterans.

In Congress, I have sponsored many legislative proposals and cosponsored more than 50 pieces of legislation that will positively benefit our veterans and their families."

This year, I introduced H.R. 2898, the Buddy Check Week, which has been endorsed by the American Legion.

The American Legion send email urging all congressional offices to support veterans by cosponsoring H.R. 2898, a bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to designate a week as "Buddy Check Week" for the purpose of outreach and education concerning peer wellness checks for veterans, and for other purposes.

The American Legion was chartered and incorporated by Congress in 1919, and today it is the nation's largest wartime veterans service organization.

As we continue to fight the COVID-19 pandemic on all fronts, we cannot forget about our duty to care for our veterans who have already sacrificed so much for this country.

Throughout this epidemic, the feeling of isolation among veterans has only been amplified, causing an increased risk of suicide within the community.

CBS News has reported a 20 percent increase in military suicides when compared to the same period in 2019.

A report conducted by the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute found that for every 5 percent increase in the unemployment rate, we could lose an additional 550 veterans to suicide annually and up to 20,000 more veterans may be susceptible to substance abuse as a result of the crisis.

Now more than ever, we need the Buddy Check Week Act.

This bill would provide vital support and training to organize outreach events and educate veterans on how to conduct peer wellness checks and recognize signs of problems in fellow veterans that indicate suicide risks.

This legislation is modeled after the American Legion's "Buddy Check National Week of Calling," held March 11 to 16, 2019, and will augment the organization's efforts to conduct outreach to veterans across the nation.

The Buddy Check Week Act directs the Secretary of Veterans Affairs in consultation with veterans, non-profits that serve veterans, mental health experts, and members of the Armed Forces, to develop and implement collaborative education opportunities for veterans to learn how to conduct wellness checks.

The VA will provide online or in-person training to individuals, as well as provide opportunities for Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) to learn how to: train individuals to conduct peer wellness checks, transfer phone calls to the Veterans Crisis Line, and be resilient when handling a veteran in crisis.

The Buddy Check Week Act is a fitting way to honor our veterans and I look forward to working with my colleagues to see that it becomes law.

On the battlefield, the military pledges to leave no soldier behind.

As a nation, let it be our pledge that when they return home, we leave no veteran behind.

This day and every day let us honor their service with actions that fulfill our commitment to our troops, their families, and our veterans—and that are worthy of our grateful nation.

IN HONOR OF LESTER A.
BURDETTE

HON. JOHN JOYCE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 12, 2020

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Lester A. Burdette of Huntingdon County for his service in the United States Army. Lester is an outstanding Pennsylvanian, and I am grateful for his service to our nation, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and our community.

In Pennsylvania and across the country, our veterans have served and sacrificed for Americans' freedom and our values. They answered the call to serve and fight for us—at a great cost. Truly, our veterans are the best of America.

In Congress, it is my privilege—and my responsibility—to stand up for those who have served our country in uniform, as well as to recognize these brave Americans. As a nation, we are indebted to them. On behalf of the 13th Congressional District, I thank Lester for his service to our nation and our community.

HONORING THE LIFE OF
CONSTANTINE "BUZZ" BELER

HON. GEORGE HOLDING

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 12, 2020

Mr. HOLDING. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor the life of Constantine "Buzz" Beler, who passed away last month at the age of 90. For more than half a century, Buzz was a towering figure in the restaurant industry and a beloved pillar of his community.

The son of Peter and Cleo Harikleia "Hattie" Beler, Buzz learned the ropes of the restaurant industry at a young age working at his parents' restaurant in Baltimore, Maryland.

Buzz went on to attend the University of Virginia where he was a member of the Riding team and a standout in the classroom. Following graduation, Buzz returned home to pursue a law degree at the University of Maryland.

Buzz did a brief stint in the Army and then spent some time working at a local law firm. Ultimately, though, Buzz found himself yearning to return to the restaurant business. When the Horizon House—a little known eatery in Baltimore—went up for sale in 1965, Buzz and his brother seized the opportunity and opened up the "Prime Rib."

Their elegant, yet simplistic steakhouse did quite well. A decade later the brothers decided

to open a second location in Washington, D.C. in 1976. The venture was a smashing success. Over the years, the Prime Rib became a renowned institution—racking up a long list of local and national accolades.

All the while, Buzz could be found at the steakhouse nearly every night of the week—where he oversaw operations and spent his time chatting up customers.

Several generations of locals came to admire Buzz for his strong character, impeccable work ethic, and vibrant spirit. Buzz will be remembered as a warmhearted, gracious gentleman who rose to prominence and achieved success the right way.

Buzz was a dear friend and I will always cherish the memories I have of him. His was truly a life well-lived.

RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND KAZAKHSTAN

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 12, 2020

Mr. HASTINGS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the importance of the bilateral relationship between the United States and Kazakhstan. This has been a key relationship for the United States ever since Kazakhstan established its independence almost 30 years ago. The Republic of Kazakhstan's first president, Nursultan Nazarbayev, oversaw Kazakhstan's emergence as the economic leader of Central Asia, and the United States' key ally in the region, as evidenced in part by the fact that U.S. companies are the largest source of direct foreign investment in Kazakhstan. This is in large part due to the fact Kazakhstan has implemented reform and liberalization policies that have strengthened the bond between our two countries.

Similarly, Kazakhstan has embarked on a path of political reforms to match its successful economic reforms and is taking an increasingly visible role in global affairs. As Chairman of the Helsinki Commission, I must highlight the fact that Kazakhstan chaired the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in 2010 and led the U.N. Security Council in 2017–2018. In 2018, President Nazarbayev visited Washington, D.C., in connection with the announcement of an Enhanced Strategic Partnership for the 21st Century between Kazakhstan and the United States. The countries agreed to heightened cooperation on political and security issues, including those related to Afghanistan and other defense initiatives, terrorism, extremism, the rule of law, and human rights.

On November 30th, Kazakhstan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs will be hosting a conference to review former President Nazarbayev's long career and highlight his efforts and accomplishments in establishing Kazakhstan as a global leader in a number of important areas. Perhaps most notably is the former president's unbending dedication to advancing the principles of nuclear nonproliferation, a stance that has made the entire world a safer place for this and future generations.

I also applaud current President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev's efforts to prioritize additional

political reforms that will increase transparency and make the government more responsive to all of Kazakhstan's citizens.

Madam Speaker, as former President Nazarbayev celebrates his 80th birthday and the people of Kazakhstan approach the celebration of their country's 30th anniversary, I wish all people of Kazakhstan nothing but peace, prosperity, and continued blessings.

IN HONOR OF MARGARET G. BURGESS

HON. JOHN JOYCE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 12, 2020

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Margaret G. Burgess of Huntingdon County for her service in the United States Navy. Margaret is an outstanding Pennsylvanian, and I am grateful for her service to our nation, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and our community.

In Pennsylvania and across the country, our veterans have served and sacrificed for Americans' freedom and our values. They answered the call to serve and fight for us—at a great cost. Truly, our veterans are the best of America.

In Congress, it is my privilege—and my responsibility—to stand up for those who have served our country in uniform, as well as to recognize these brave Americans. As a nation, we are indebted to them. On behalf of the 13th Congressional District, I thank Margaret for her service to our nation and our community.

RECOGNIZING THE CAREER OF MAYOR JACKIE A. MECK

HON. PAUL A. GOSAR

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 12, 2020

Mr. GOSAR. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the distinguished career of Buckeye, Arizona's Mayor, Jackie A. Meck, as he prepares for a much-deserved retirement. A native and lifelong resident of Buckeye, Mayor Meck has dedicated his life to public service. Buckeye and Maricopa County have been well served under his leadership.

Mayor Meck's retirement comes as he concludes his third consecutive term as Mayor of the City of Buckeye. Three terms is a mere drop in the bucket of the lifetime of work he has given this great city, as he was previously Mayor in 1973 and a two-time member of the city council.

His dedication to the advancement of his community runs not just through Buckeye, but also into West Valley and all of Arizona. A member of the Board of Directors of the Greater Phoenix Economic Council, Maricopa Association of Governments Regional Council, Gila River's El Rio Restoration Project Executive Committee, Interstate-1 Coalition, and much, much more, Mayor Meck continues to be an active member of the governmental and non-governmental associations which work for the benefit of Buckeye and its surrounding areas.

Mayor Meck exemplifies the fierce patriotism and unwavering commitment to country that exists in Arizona's Fourth Congressional District. Under Mayor Meck's tenure, Buckeye has grown stronger and more prosperous. We are grateful for his service to Buckeye, Maricopa County, and the great state of Arizona. Madam Speaker, I urge all my colleagues to join me in thanking Mayor Meck for his service to Buckeye and in wishing him a very happy retirement.

HONORING EDGAR SCULARK

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 12, 2020

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Edgar Sculark.

Edgar is the third child to the late L.A. and Evie Sculark and was born and raised in Parchman, Mississippi. L.A. Sculark was one of the first African Americans to be employed at the Mississippi Department of Corrections. Edgar was the first African-American child born to an African-American couple while living on the penitentiary property. Edgar was educated in the Drew Separate School District in Drew, MS, where he was very active in sports and band. After graduation, Edgar attended Mississippi Delta Community College in Moorhead, Mississippi, where his major was Criminal Justice.

Shortly after the start of his college education, Edgar left the classroom to support a new family. Edgar married his high school sweetheart, Mashelia Kidd, and they now reside in Batesville, MS, with their three children. His greatest regret was not completing his college degree. However, that milestone helped to transition his mindset into being a big advocate for Education and Living a Purpose Driven Life. Edgar gave service to this country, as well as this state; he spent 10 years in the Mississippi Army National Guard and worked 10 years with the Mississippi Department of Corrections. Edgar also had the opportunity to cultivate his craft by being a master trainer with XPO Logistics. During his tenure with XPO Logistics, he started new companies and coordinated safety trainings. Although he had a flourishing corporate career, Edgar felt that he was neglecting his purpose. It was then that he knew something was missing and broken.

Amidst the broken, Edgar always had a desire to build. With those desires came visions of operation with his Non-Profit Organization (GEM) Greater Expectation Ministries and LLC Voice2Vision (2019). Outlined within his organizations, he ventured into different platforms that delegate the spirit of empowerment though: Mature Minded Males (MMM), Favor Filled Females (FFF), Character Chipped Children (CCC), Book & Blazers, Scholars and Skirts and The Nehemiah Grind. Edgar's ultimate goal of servitude, through both organizations and each platform, is to continue the cycle of youth and people empowerment by way of Motivational Speaking, Mentoring, Reform Misguided Conduct, and Life and Character Coaching. Edgar's areas of specialty are: Anti-Bullying, Personal Motivation and Self-Ownership.

At this point, Edgar began transitioning into another level of building. He reached into the